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Joint Vision 2010:
Telling Time or Building A Watch

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Class of 1999

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"The Lost Seminar"
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Joint Vision 2010 provides an operationally based template for the evolution of the Armed Forces for a challenging and uncertain future. It must become a benchmark for Service and Unified Command visions.¹

General John M. Shalikashvili, USA
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The last thing the U.S. military needs today is a top down, invalidated vision that is a "template" to "channel" the collective efforts of our armed forces.

Channeling ideas and resources at this stage could prove disastrous.²

Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper, USMC
Commander, Marine Corps Combat Development Command

Introduction

Joint Vision 2010 (JV 2010) focuses on deterring conflict and defeating fielded forces. This focus limits the development of innovative means and ways of using military forces to achieve political objectives. This paper will explore how innovation is limited by a joint vision. Next, the paper will highlight some of the neglected means of achieving political objectives. And finally, the paper will recommend how JV 2010 should be changed to be more effective in creating a visionary force, ready to tackle problems in a post-Cold War world.

How Joint Vision 2010 Limits Innovation

Joint Vision 2010 limits the Services ability to become visionary organizations where adaptation and innovation flourish. A singular, joint vision does this in two ways. First, JV 2010 creates an environment of "strategic monism" where a single

¹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010* (Washington, DC) 1.

² Paul K. Van Riper, General, USMC, "More on Innovations and Jointness," *Marine Corps Gazette* 82 (March 1998): 56.

strategic concept or approach is used to solve military problems.³ Unfortunately, the post Goldwater-Nichols world has compounded this problem by making it near blaspheme to suggest an alternative to the concepts described in the document. Second, the JV 2010 is based on Cold War thinking and assumptions. The post-Cold War world is full of new military missions that are ignored by the JV 2010 focus on deterring and winning wars. Additionally, JV 2010's key characteristic of Full Spectrum Dominance seems predicated on Cold War funding levels that are implausible in today's fiscally constrained environment.

Strategic Monism. Like all good strategic visions, Joint Vision 2010 is meant to unify the United States' military around a common purpose and set of actions. The first paragraph of JV 2010 attempts to do this. It states, "this template provides a common direction for our services in developing their unique capabilities within a joint framework of doctrine and programs as they prepare to meet an uncertain and challenging future."⁴ This statement indicates that all services should share a single vision despite their differing assumptions about the nature of war, core competencies, and view of the future as they develop their unique service capabilities. The statement also calls on the Services to develop unique warfighting capabilities. But preparing unique capabilities may prove impossible for the

³ F. G. Hoffman, "JV 2010: A Different Perspective," *Marine Corps Gazette* 81 (December 1997): 31.

⁴ Joint Vision 2010, 1.

Services. By providing "an operationally based template for the evolution of the Armed Forces," JV 2010 compels the Services to create forces in the likeness of the singular, joint vision.

An analogous way of looking at the problem of creating unique forces from a single template is to consider the template of life, DNA. In biology, a molecule of DNA serves as the "template," pattern, or mold for the creation of an individual life form. A life form cloned from a single strand of DNA will have the identical characteristics, good and bad, that were displayed by the original strand of DNA. The only way to create a different, unique characteristic is to deviate from the DNA template by combining two strands of unique DNA or altering the first, single strand. As this biologic analogy shows, using a single, joint template to create Service unique forces may prove impossible, and this is exactly what JV 2010 seeks to do.

Cold War Assumptions in a post-Cold War World. JV 2010 states, "As we build our forces to this joint vision, there will be strong threads of continuity with the contemporary strategic and operational environment. Among these threads are American goals and interests, as well as the missions, tasks, strategic concepts, and quality of our Armed Forces."⁵ Clearly, JV 2010 did not revise its assumptions about the strategic security environment to reflect post-Cold War realities.⁶ This fact alone

⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶ Hoffman, 32.

creates a significant problem for the military innovator. If the environment has not changed, there is no motivation to change the ways and means of attaining America's goals and interests. But more important than JV 2010's lack of a clear change motivator, is the fact that the security environment has changed in the eyes of our civilian masters.

Anthony Lake, the National Security Advisor to President Clinton, highlighted these changes in 1995. He said, "Old threats like ethnic and religious violence and aggression by rogue states have taken on new and dangerous dimensions. And no one is immune to a host of equal opportunity destroyers:

- the spread of weapons of mass destruction,
- terrorism, organized crime,
- drug trafficking, environmental degradation.

Individually, each could undermine our growing security. Together, they have the potential to cause terrible chaos around the world and in our society."⁷

Mr. Lake believes this new security environment has created a list of new missions for the military. He lists these tasks as:

- defense against the United States and its citizens and allies;
- countering aggression;
- defending key economic interests;
- preserving and promoting democracy;

⁷ Anthony Lake, "Defining Missions, Setting Deadlines," U.S. Department of State Dispatch (18 March 1996): 127.

- preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, international crime, and drug trafficking;
- maintaining our reliability with allies;
- performing humanitarian assistance to combat famines, disasters, and gross human rights violations.⁸

This list runs counter to JV 2010's stated primary task of deterring conflict, or failing that, fighting and winning our nation's wars.⁹ Mr. Lake's list reflects current White House thinking. Gone are the days when the armed forces of the United States are only used as an instrument of power when a vital national interest is at stake. Equally gone is the assumption that if employed to take hostile action, overwhelming force will be used. Recent events in Iraq (Desert Fox and the continuing SAM jousts), Honduras ('Hurricane Mitch disaster relief'), cyberspace (defending against ongoing, coordinated attacks on Pentagon computers¹⁰), and Kosovo (NATO actions against Ethnic strife and gross human rights violations) demonstrate that military forces are spending as much time performing tasks on Mr. Lake's list as they are spending deterring conflict or fighting and winning wars.

Another left over Cold War assumption is that our military forces will be given the unlimited resources needed to pursue JV 2010's key characteristic, "Full Spectrum Dominance." Full

⁸ Ibid., 128.

⁹ Joint Vision 2010, 4.

¹⁰ "Pentagon 'At War' With Computer Hackers," CNN Interactive, available at: <http://cnn.com:50/TECH/computing/9903/05/pentagon.hackers/index.html>; Internet; accessed 12 April 1999.

Spectrum Dominance implies that American forces will be able to control all mediums, all the time, in all places in 2010. Working to attain this impracticable vision will require substantial increases in defense spending. Without increased spending, today's capabilities must be traded against new technologies, training, and doctrine that will only be available in the 2010 future. Given present military commitments in Iraq, Honduras, cyberspace, and Kosovo; it is doubtful present forces can be traded for future capabilities.

Another problem with the notion of "full spectrum dominance" is that it is not practically achievable in all mediums. For instance, controlling the cyberspace -- at all places, at all times -- is not technically feasible. One obvious cyber case is the Internet. The Internet is a complex, open system that cannot be controlled. Single systems in the overall architecture may be controlled, but controlling the entire system of systems is beyond anyone's abilities. Of course, industry is willing to spend millions of dollars and years of effort trying to achieve the impossible JV 2010 vision.

JV 2010: Telling Time

Joint Vision 2010 represents a singular view of what military capabilities are needed to influence other nation states and international actors to behave in accordance with America's interests. JV 2010 calls for a strategy based on Full Spectrum Dominance. America's military will achieve Full Spectrum

Dominance via two new means -- information superiority and technological innovations. These two new means will enable four new operational concepts. They are:

- dominate maneuver,
- precision engagement,
- focused logistics, and
- full-dimension protection.

These four new operational concepts will allow our military forces to achieve massed effects against enemy fielded forces.

Stated another way, the JV 2010 strategy calls for improved "heat and fragmentation" efficiency on the battlefield. This assumes that using the military instrument to destroy fielded forces is the best way to force rogue nations and actors to conform to America's will. It overlooks the real purpose of war as stated by Von Clausewitz - "to constrain the enemy to accomplish our will." It's also counter to Sir Basil Liddell Hart's ideas on war. In 1944 he said,

The real target in war is the mind of the enemy command, not the bodies of his troops. If we operate against his troops it is fundamentally for the effect that action will produce on the mind and will of the commander; indeed, the trend of warfare and the development of new weapons -- aircraft and tanks -- promise to give us increased and more direct opportunities of striking at this psychological target.¹¹

Both Von Clausewitz and Liddell Hart recognized that the real target of war was the mind of the enemy commander. Each

¹¹ Basil Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War*, London: Faber and Faber, 1943, 48.

recognized that warfare was subordinate to state politics and that the ultimate objective of warfare was to influence the opposing state's national leadership. JV 2010 minimizes this end and continues to focus on indirect ways of using "force on force" actions to achieve political ends. JV 2010's approach limits concepts that would bypass enemy forces in favor of directly influencing enemy policy makers.

One such operational concept overlooked by JV 2010 is information operations (I/O). At the strategic level, I/O can be integrated by the National Command Authority (NCA) to influence or affect an adversary's will to act counter to our national objectives. Information operations at the strategic level would include everything from NCA press statements to computer attacks at enemy infrastructures. We are only beginning to explore the potential of this emerging instrument, yet JV 2010 looks only to information as a force enabler, not a force in its own right.

Another concept given short shrift is the use of traditional military forces in untraditional ways. JV 2010 states:

Our forces have been largely organized, trained, and equipped to defeat military forces of our potential adversaries. Direct combat against an enemy's armed forces is the most demanding and complex set of requirements we have faced. Other operations, from humanitarian assistance in peacetime through peace operations in a near hostile environment, have proved to be possible using forces optimized for wartime effectiveness.¹²

Organizing, training, and equipping for a single requirement

¹² Joint Vision 2010, 17.

means that we are not optimally prepared for other more likely, more difficult and subtler missions. U.S. forces have recently been asked to restore democracy in Haiti, fight forest fires in Indonesia, feed refugees in Albania, and restore infrastructures in Honduras. There may be new, innovative ways of organizing, training, and equipping to conduct these non-violent operations -- without giving up much, if any, combat effectiveness -- that are being overlooked by the JV 2010 template.

Recommended Changes: Build a Watch

Confronted by a challenging and uncertain future, America's military needs to create an environment of innovation where many approaches are debated and the best implemented. Unfortunately, Goldwater-Nichols has created an environment where anything "purple" is sacrosanct and anything solely "green," "blue," "khaki," or "navy blue" is suspect. JV 2010 is, by definition, the "purple" way to organize, train, equip, and fight future wars. We need to move past purple inviolability and start searching for new, unique ways of achieving political objectives in a post-Cold War world. To do that, we need a new vision for the future; one that promotes innovation and creativity rather than conformity to a single template.

We need to create a visionary military, not a single vision. The difference between a visionary Defense Department and a Defense Department with a single vision is the same as the difference between being given a watch and being told the time.

In the first case, you can tell the time over and over. In the second, you know the time only once. JV 2010 tells us the time only once. A better joint vision would drive the Services to build a watch.

In the seminal book on visionary companies, *Built to Last*, James Collins and Jerry Porras identified the underlying characteristics and dynamics common in highly visionary companies and translated their findings into a useful conceptual framework. During their six-year study, they identified twelve "realities" that shattered long-held myths about truly great businesses. Attachment 1 lists the characteristic realities uncovered by their study. This list of key characteristics describes the attributes Joint Vision 2010 should promote.

For instance, JV 2010 should use Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs) to promote Service experimentation. A recent speaker at National War College challenged the Class of 1999 with the premise that we should be working to build 200 years of world peace. Obviously, this is a BHAG, and it is one the nation's military could set for itself in a document like Joint Vision 2010. Setting this type of bold mission would drive the Services to innovate rather than stagnate around improved "heat and fragmentation" efficiency on the battlefield.

Some might argue that JV 2010's call for "full spectrum dominance" is a BHAG. But to be a BHAG, "people must 'get it'

right away; it takes little or no explanation."¹³ It takes 34 pages for the Joint Staff to explain their vision and even then many still don't 'get it.' Instead of explaining a single method of meeting the security challenges of the 21st century, JV 2010 should be shorted to the length of a tri-fold document. It should have a short set of seemingly impossible goals that each Service should be assigned. As the Services find solutions to these well-defined BHAGs, the overall military capabilities available to the NCA or a CINC would greatly increase.

A second example of how JV 2010 could be improved is also borrowed from the characteristics of visionary companies. A revised JV 2010 should seek ways to preserve the core ideology of each Service, while stimulating progress. All the Services are guilty of confusing their core ideologies with their unique cultures, strategies, policies, branches, technologies, and other non-core practices. Over time, everything done by the Services could and should change, except their core ideology -- and JV 2010 should stimulate the necessary change in each Service.

Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper, Commander of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, also sees the need for the U.S. military to become a visionary organization. He recently wrote, "I am convinced that the success of the U.S. military in the next few decades is ultimately predicated on

¹³ James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (New York: Harper Business, 1994), 94.

developing innovative and adaptive organizations."¹⁴ General Van Riper recommends changing JV 2010 so that it provides an "intent" to orient the Services to the purpose of current and future innovation efforts." Van Riper believes "there are many imaginative ideas and emerging technologies that warrant exploration to meet the numerous potential threats and crises we are likely to experience in the 21st century." General Van Riper's philosophy of innovation and adaptation would be right at home in a visionary company.

Conclusion

Our current joint vision focuses on developing improved methods of delivering firepower to fielded enemy forces. This singular focus confines future Service innovation to ways and means that support this joint vision. By doing this, JV 2010 minimizes other creative ways and means of using military forces to more directly achieve political objectives. Operations at the lower end of the force spectrum and information operations are just a few of the many emerging means that are overlooked by our current joint vision. To be a more useful document, JV 2010 should be re-written so that it promotes innovation and creativity, rather than conformity to a single template. By doing this, the U.S. military would be well on the way to becoming an innovative force, ready to tackle and solve the problems of a post-Cold War world.

¹⁴ Van Riper, 56.

ATTACHMENT 1
The Twelve Realities of Visionary Companies.¹⁵

1. Visionary companies often get off to a slow start, but win the long race.
2. Visionary company founders concentrated more on architecting an enduring institution than on being a great individual leader.
3. Visionary companies pursue a cluster of objectives, of which making money is one--and not necessarily the primary one.
4. Visionary companies ask, "What do we actually value deep down to our toes?"
5. Visionary organizations display a powerful drive for progress that enables them to change and adapt without compromising their cherished ideals and values.
6. Visionary companies use 'Big Hairy Audacious Goals' to stimulate progress.
7. Visionary companies are so clear about what they stand for and what they're trying to achieve that they simply can't have room for those unwilling or unable to fit their exacting standards.
8. Visionary companies make some of their best moves by experimentation, trial and error, opportunism, and -- quite literally--accident.
9. Visionary companies have dashed to bits the conventional wisdom that significant change and fresh ideas cannot come from insiders.
10. Visionary companies focus primarily on beating themselves.
11. Visionary companies do not brutalize themselves with the purely rational view that says you can have either "A" or "B" but not both. Instead, visionary companies embrace the paracoxical view that allows them to pursue both "A" and "B" at the same time.
12. Visionary companies attained their stature not so much because they made visionary pronouncements. Visionary companies became visionary because they took thousands of steps in a never-ending process to be great.

¹⁵ Collins, 7-11.

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